

STRIKE!

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The Newspaper Dedicated to Direct Action

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The B.C. Five Face Trial

Dissent on Trial



Gerry Hannah



Julie Belmas



Brent Taylor



Ann Hansen



Doug Stewart

By St. Stateless & Alexander Bazarov

On January 20, 1983, five political activists — Julie Belmas, Doug Stewart, Ann Hansen, Gerry Hannah and Brent Taylor — were arrested by a team of combat-equipped policemen on a remote stretch of highway near Squamish, British Columbia. Since then, they have been charged with a series of bombings and conspiracies related to anti-militarist, ecological, and feminist issues. Charges against the Five will proceed through five separate trials, four of which will take place in British Columbia and the fifth will be held in Toronto.

The arrests and subsequent development of events leading up to the trial of these individuals unveil the making of a political persecution unprecedented in recent Canadian history. In order to appreciate the full political implications contained in this trial, it is necessary to go back to the beginning.

On the Political Landscape

For a number of years now, we have witnessed in Canada the flourishing of dissident movements which convey the concerns, fears, desires, and hopes of various segments of the population. Whether it be the feminist movement, gay liberation, ecological and disarmament movements, they are expressions of a general discontent, a popular challenge and protest against a long decaying and destructive social order. Indeed, it is perhaps only in our era that

life as such appears so threatened and futile; one fears daily the instantaneous destruction of everything that is dear in our lives. In this climate of impending catastrophe, the question as to what can be done, what *must* be done becomes more urgent than ever before.

As far as the avenue of electoral politics is concerned, it has shown itself to be a dead end. Rhetorics notwithstanding, governments and states appear more as problems than solutions. They are the very ones who dare to contemplate, and openly calculate, the kill and overkill of a "limited nuclear war". Parallel to the total bankruptcy of traditional power politics, a new trend is developing among various existing protest-resistance movements, a movement within movements, so to speak (for lack of a better term, we shall call this an extra-parliamentary tendency). Although still remaining in its embryonic form, this tendency holds the only realistic promise for meaningful social change, thus, posing as a direct threat to established state power. It ignores the empty promises of political parties. It does not content itself with a few demonstrations here and there, but is constantly searching for effective tactics to confront and counter-act the institutions of violence and destruction.

The tactics of this extra-parliamentary tendency consist in *direct action* ranging from civil disobedience to blockades, as compared to *indirect action* (such as lobbying and court actions). In Vancouver, for example, the unem-

ployed are organizing on their own to combat economic austerity, instead of relying on the whims of the mainstream political acrobats such as the so-called "champions of the working man", the NDP (Canadian social democrats). In Toronto, peace activists staged blockades in front of Litton Industries, which manufactures the guidance system of the cruise missile. In short, a new form of political actions which defy the 'rules of the game' is fermenting on the Canadian political landscape. Groups or individuals who have engaged, or are likely to engage in any of these actions become the principal targets of the policing forces. The bombings of Litton and the B.C. Hydro substation are convenient pretexts for the Canadian state to contain and destroy the growth of an extra-parliamentary tendency in its inception. The fight for the Five, therefore, converges with the fight against political persecution.

The Hidden Agenda

In terms of the specifics, what is it that the Canadian state wants to accomplish through the arrests and subsequent trials of the Five? What does it have to gain by railroading the Five to prison? The first and most obvious reason is the physical removal of political militants. Secondly, the state wants to create a precedent in its attempt to criminalize a growing portion of the dissident movements. Thus, it will be able to portray the movement at large to the general public as being inhabited by

"criminals" and "terrorists". Thirdly, it will also attempt to discredit the extra-parliamentary tendency in the eyes of the more conservative tendencies among the protest-resistance movements, isolating it from within the movements, and inhibiting it from spreading.

Let us see how the facts bear us out. Right after the Litton and Red Hot Video porn-shop bombings, a climate of hysteria was created across Canada through the media and the policing forces, to the effect that there exists an anarchist network of conspirators ready to destabilize the country. At the same time, different members from the disarmament, ecological and feminist movements were faced with police harassment and surveillance. This form of state repression continues, and even escalates after the arrests of the Five. For example, some members of the Toronto-based Cruise Missile Conversion Project and Alliance for Non-Violent Action, as well as the Support the Five Group, were given official notice of surveillance. In British Columbia, 12 women who have been active in the anti-porn movement were harassed and threatened by police. The most recent and blatant example can be found when Kenneth Deyarmond attended a demonstration in Toronto protesting Margaret Thatcher's presence in Canada. As Thatcher walked towards the hotel in which she was to meet with other delegates, Deyarmond was pushed towards the security police by a man in

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Anti-Militarism in the GDR

By Brian Amesly

An unprecedented, multi-national movement of protest against militarism is growing across Eastern Europe. New 'unofficial' peace movements have emerged or are in the process of emerging in East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and to a small degree, even in the USSR itself. This development adds a whole new dimension to the global resistance against militarism and the threat of nuclear annihilation, and at the same time, opens up an entirely new arena of struggle for social change in the region.

This movement is exceptional and unique in many respects in that it is strongest in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or East Germany; only the new peace movement in Hungary is making an impact which is comparable. This new anti-militarist movement is also phenomenal insofar as it is the largest manifestation of social protest in the GDR since the working class insurrection of June 1953 which was smashed by the Soviet Red Army.

The reason why a strong manifestation of anti-militarist sentiment is occurring in the GDR can be seen by looking at the evolution of the peace movement there. This evolution reveals how the movement is a reaction to the militaristic nature of East German society on the part of people who are horrified by the growing prospect of being at the centre-stage of yet another world war. It also demonstrates the

problems this new peace movement faces, and thus, compels anti-militarists in the West to assess the practical implications of an autonomous peace movement within the Soviet military block.

East Germany's new peace movement began in late 1981, when a group of young people initiated an appeal for an unofficial anti-war protest to coincide with the officially sanctioned annual February commemoration of the destruction of Dresden in WWII. Leaflets for the event were subsequently issued in January of last year, and then in February, the movement made its real public debut. Following a peace forum sponsored by the Catholic Church, more than 5000 people (mostly youth), demonstrated on their own initiative on the streets of Dresden. Given official disapproval of the action and hostility towards unauthorized political activity of any kind, the event illustrated the depth of anti-war sentiment and the receptivity to independent expression of it within the general population.

The Berlin Appeal

The subversive potential of the sentiment of protest had already been crystalized into a programme less than a month before. Commonly referred to as *The Berlin Appeal* (it was actually entitled *Make Peace Without Weapons*), it was the work of the outspoken pacifist and Protestant Pastor Reiner Epplermann who



"Swords into Ploughshares", the badge banned by East German authorities when it became too popular a symbol of the growing peace movement. Since the ban, peace movement supporters there have taken to wearing a blank white badge.

is the most well known activist in the new peace movement. The document shows the motivations behind the movement by addressing the threat of nuclear war, particularly in the case of Germany, with a call for nuclear free Germany as a step towards a nuclear free Europe. It goes on to state that "every spontaneous expression of the desire for peace be publicly approved and promoted."

The most critical portion of the *Berlin Appeal* poses a series of questions challenging the militarization of everyday life in the GDR. It also provides examples as diverse as compulsory military service, forced participation in civil defense exercises, military instruction in schools, and the sale of military-oriented toys which were encouraged upon the children in kindergartens by the authorities. Questions critical of these institutionalized practices are accompanied by a call from Epplermann to seek the removal of all foreign forces from both Germanies. By virtue of this call, Epplermann's appeal directs itself against the Soviet military industrial complex to which the armed forces of the East German state are an unwavering ally.

Other protests followed those in February. The largest one was staged at Potsdam, East Berlin, involving 3500 people. So far, women have conducted the most prolonged protest. The protest was a response to a law passed in March 1982, providing for the conscription of

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For Starters

If you're a regular reader of **STRIKE!** you will have noticed some major changes in the paper's lay-out this issue. Among them is the transfer of the **STRIKE!** Network and Editorial Advisory Board box from page two to page seven. Contrary to what you might think this move to the rear does not imply a diminution in the roles of these two bodies but, rather, just the opposite. We will also try to devote at least 2 pages per issue to workplace and related articles.

The Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) was established at the 1982 **STRIKE!** conference with the stated aim of "broaden(ing) the decision making process for policy, to co-ordinate support activities and to serve as a 'court of last resort' on the publication of controversial articles." (*Conference Report, STRIKE! 2:9*). With only this nebulous mandate to guide it, the EAB got off to a shaky start and never really lived up to the high expectations we had for it.

At the recent **STRIKE!** conference in Toronto, it was decided that the EAB should be re-vamped and that it should play a more active role in the process of producing **STRIKE!**. In practical terms this involves an ongoing analysis of the content and direction of **STRIKE!**. The vehicle for this process is the EAB Bulletin which appears 10 times a year and is circulated to the members of the EAB as well as to the groups and individuals who comprise the **STRIKE!** network.

At present the EAB is a 7-member body, with three alternates, chosen from the **STRIKE!** Network at the annual **STRIKE!** conference.

The **STRIKE!** Network is a loose assemblage of groups and

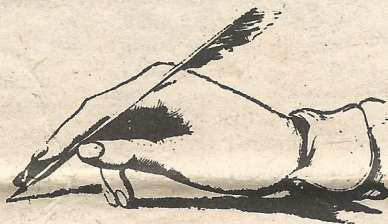


individuals who distribute the paper in their areas and who actively support the project. The only condition of membership is agreement with the **STRIKE!** Statement of Purpose.

The members of the EAB and the **STRIKE!** Network are encouraged to write for the paper and also to actively solicit articles and graphic work from individuals and publications outside the immediate network. Our joint aim is to produce a coherent, theoretically rigorous, broadly based newspaper that both reflects and acts upon the Anarchist and Libertarian Socialist milieu.

If you or your group like what you see in this newspaper and are interested in aiding the project we encourage you to contact us at: **STRIKE! Network**, P.O. Box 284, Main Station, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, L2R 6T7

LETTERS TO STRIKE!



Anarchism vs Nationalism

Dear **STRIKE!**,

I would like to take issue with Tom Baker's latest missive on the issue of "national liberation struggles" (**STRIKE!**, May, '83). It seems to me that Tom's letter, like his previous writings on this subject, is confused. Throughout his letter Tom uses the term "democracy" as if it were synonymous with what "national liberation movements" are about. The term "democracy" can hardly be used to clarify anything nowadays because just about everybody says they're for it — from Pinochet's dictatorship to the Russian bureaucratic bosses. Thus, anyone who uses the term surely owes us an explanation of what they mean by it. Tom never provides us with any explanation. At the end of his letter he says democracy is a "necessary part of anarchism". It seems to me that this may or may not be true, depending on what it means. Here in the U.S., we know that the official understanding of "democracy" refers to a form of state where the politicians who run an essentially authoritarian machine in the interests of the capitalist bosses must periodically submit to a vote of the people to keep their jobs. This "democracy" is not in fact rule by the people over their own destiny, and anarchism seeks the destruction of this state. The concept of "democracy" that is essential to anarchism is the idea of direct democracy in industry and society. This is essential to anarchism because libertarian democracy of the base is the only way to run industry and society without top-down control by a minority. It's not clear that Tom is suggesting that "national liberation movements" are moving in the direction of this kind of self-managed social order.

In that case, what is he saying? Maybe he's using the term "democracy" loosely to refer to civil liberties of the sort that exist in the industrialized countries like the U.S. and western Europe. In that case, his argument is a kind of "lesser evil" argument: "By overthrowing particularly autocratic and brutal regimes, 'national liberation movements' both improve the immediate lot of the people as well as providing more room for organizing for the kind

of change anarchists want." The problem is, if you look at the actual character of the post-World War II "national liberation movements" — Vietnam, China, Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, the PLO, etc. etc. — Tom's attempt to define them as struggles for "democratization" and "civil liberties" seems rather artificial and implausible. Where are the "democracy" or "civil liberties" that have been "gained"?

The peculiarity of Tom's interpretation of "national liberation" comes out of his statement that the PLO's objective is "democratization" of the Israeli state. As if the PLO were a movement for reform of the internal workings of the Israeli state. In fact, the PLO is itself an incipient state — with its own government and armed force — a state that seeks to supplant the Israeli state — at least in part (and perhaps ultimately in all) of the territory it rules over. Nor is the Israeli state less "democratic" than any state the PLO is likely to create.

Tom betrays by his own choice of examples, his support for Third World nationalist movements — i.e., any movement in conflict with U.S. or European domination — ends up putting him in support of some of the most brutal and illiberal regimes of recent times — such as the military junta in Argentina and the tyrannical regime of mullahs and merchants in Iran. In the case of Argentina, support for the junta's war for the Malvinas can't be interpreted as a fight against that same junta. The fact that there are now protests against the generals — as their economic and social mismanagement and authoritarianism have become unbearable — is irrelevant. After all, if they'd won the war, the dictatorship would have been strengthened, not weakened. If anything, the existence of general strikes and protests today is an argument that the left should have advocated "revolutionary defeatism" during the Malvinas war. Besides, the Malvinas islands have little to do with imperialist domination of the Argentine people — what bearing do these sheep-inhabited rocks have on the actual plight of Argentines? For all we know, the generals might have used the Malvinas islands as a convenient gulag for leftists and unionists. Is Tom saying that a war of conquest by a gang of generals is a cause that serves the interests of the Argentine people?

In the case of Iran, you have a nation which has itself been a minor imperialist power. The power of the Khomeini regime has been consolidated through the murder of Kurdish "national liberationists". Also, it is not clear that numerous other nationalities in Iran, e.g. Azerbaijan Turks, Armenians, Arabs, Baluchis, etc. have any more autonomy than before. The idea that there is some significant improvement in freedom or space for organizing in Iran today is hardly plausible.

Obviously, nobody who is concerned with human emancipation is going to reject any real freedoms and improvements in the lives of the world's peoples. And it is true that there have sometimes been improvements that have accompanied the victory of "national liberation movements". Does it follow that we should

support the coming-to-power of those movements, as Tom believes? I don't think so. Improvements in the actual situation of the people come about mainly due to the participation of the people in the struggle against the old regimes and the need for any new group to gain the support of the people to consolidate their power. Improvements in liberty and material conditions for working people do not come about because of the benevolence of rulers but only due to the struggles of the people themselves. I could understand the idea of supporting the working people of these countries — whether against local or foreign bosses, and I can understand opposition to the U.S. government's role in the Third World, but why should we support the coming-to-power of some new elite, whether the FMLN or PLO or Iranian mullahs? So long as class oppression continues to exist, we know that this will guarantee future austerity and authoritarianism in the lives of the working class, and the continued existence of the state guarantees a future for repression in some form.

In theory, it might be possible to conceive of a nationalist revolutionary movement that is not statist and top-down in its concept of change — a thesis Noam Chomsky has argued for. On the other hand, when we look at the actual existing "national liberation movements", we don't see anti-statist and anti-hierarchical movements, but movements that seek to supplant one top-down military machine by another, or one elite for another. Moreover, there is the fact that any working that attempts to create a self-managed society in a single country will face the hostility of the whole capitalist world order, not to mention that of the bureaucrats in Peking or Moscow, and will have at their disposal only the resources of one fragment of a highly interdependent world economy. This points to the need for the self-managed workers' revolution to be international in scope, a revolution based on solidarity of workers against bosses everywhere. But a "national liberation movement", due to the particular definition of such a movement, seeks an alliance on the basis of the fight of one nation against another, which has tended to subordinate the struggle against class oppression to a struggle to oust domination by foreign bosses in favor of domination by local bosses.

For a world without bosses,
Tom Wetzel
San Francisco

A Guide to Action

Dear **STRIKE!** Collective:

I write for two reasons. The first is to update my address with you. The second reason is suggestive. Anarchism, despite its emphasis on people's needs, its understanding of non-material factors in society, the acknowledgement of the importance of various social institutions (especially the state), and a belief in personal development, lacks collective strategic analysis. The critique of hierarchy remains, almost 100 years after Bakunin, essentially a critique. Practical organization alternatives are rarely ever offered. In general, anarchism has little in the way of methodology for accomplishing change. The strengths of the perspective can serve to create a revolutionary consciousness but little exists as a guide for activities. Can this be because anarchism, in its current condition, is too far removed from actual organizing, organizational form, and social motion. The deserved criticisms of centralism and politics have unfortunately left a schism in relation to what should take their place.

Anarchism is by no means irrelevant, in contrast to classical Marxist and Leninist perspectives. What is needed, however, is the development of ideas and practices which broaden and enlighten the libertarian tendencies that already exist in order to develop a modern revolutionary perspective. **STRIKE!** which in the past has alluded to such possibilities, could make a contribution to this process by explicitly opening its pages to dialogue. I hope you will consider such an addition to the paper.

Michael Hoover
Orlando, Fl.

STRIKE! Replies:

We think you have made an excellent suggestion. While our dismal financial situation prevents us from expanding the paper to accommodate your proposal, there is no reason why there cannot be debate on the methods of social change within the pages of **STRIKE!** (such as the one that is taking place on Third World Nationalism.) We would, therefore, like to encourage you and all our other readers to submit articles or letters for publication.

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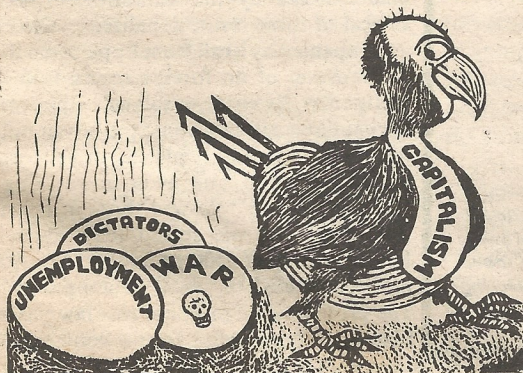
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Central America Update

By Jon Bekken

As U.S. proxies face continued military setbacks in Nicaragua and El Salvador, U.S. troops are playing a more direct role in the fighting. Most prominent in this wide-range military offensive is a military exercise code-named Big Pine II, which involves thousands of U.S. troops, aircraft carriers, and battleships in and near Central America.

Intended to test the U.S. capacity to "quarantine" — to blockade, in less euphemistic terms — Nicaragua, Big Pine II is conspicuously reminiscent of Teddy Roosevelt's famous maxim; without the soft words this time around. Indeed, the political rhetoric has been heating up as quickly as the military build-up itself. Reagan recently argued that it will be "extremely difficult" to bring about "stability" in Central America until the Sandinista regime is toppled.

Get The Puppets Ready

In El Salvador, government troops briefly seized the initiative last July, and have now succeeded in transforming the situation into a stalemate. This has only been made possible, however, by a massive influx of U.S. aid, and the increased control by U.S. military advisors over the Salvadoran army. In recognition of this fact, the Pentagon is requesting that the numbers of advisors be doubled from 55 to 125, and that they be permitted to participate in field operations. These requests, along with requests for further increases in economic and military aid to the beleaguered Salvadoran military, have become more aggressive since the death of the first U.S. advisor three months ago.

Honduras has now become the base for U.S. military activities throughout the region. A training camp has been set up in Puerto Cas-

tilla, where 125 Green Berets are training Salvadoran and Honduran troops. In addition to the building of a \$150 million air and naval base, a U.S. Air Force radar station is installed in Honduras to monitor flights over El Salvador and Nicaragua. As part of the Big Pine II exercise, Honduras is being used as the staging site for a mock invasion of Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, the remnants of Somoza's national guard, fighting under the name of FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Front), have succeeded in inflicting significant casualties on the civilian population, and causing some economic damage, but have scored no direct military gains. Indeed, given the FDN's lack of success on the battle front and their notorious reputation among the majority of the population, some U.S. officials are beginning to consider moves to support the smaller, but less unpopular forces under the command of Eder Pastora, a former Sandinista.

For the moment, however, the U.S. is responding to the FDN's setbacks by increasing its material support, while simultaneously attempting to exercise more direct control over the day-to-day military operations. The CIA is now doubling the number of FDN guerrillas its sponsors. Recent reports indicate that American pilots are working for the FDN through the CIA.

In Guatemala, a military coup placed former Defense Minister Mejia Victores in power on August 8th, just one day after he met in Honduras with U.S. General Frederic Woerner (commander of U.S. forces in Panama), the Honduran military commander, and El Salvador's Defense Minister. The U.S. has long sought to 'stabilize' Guatemala so that it can be used as another base for military activities in the region. The Rios Montt regime had shown itself incapable of suppressing dissent in the country,



or of combating the growing guerilla movement. Shortly after the coup, the U.S. announced that it was restoring economic and military aid (suspended in 1978 as a result of too blatant "human rights violations") to Guatemala. According to U.S. ambassador Frederic Chapin, more than \$100 million in aid will soon be channeled to the new government.

Withing the FMLN and FDR, tensions are mounting on whether to push for all-out victory or to cut a deal with the Salvadoran junta, which lead to a series of shootings among leaders of the FPL, one of the FMLN's more 'militant' factions. Curiously enough, the U.S. left, and the Solidarity movement have little to say about these shootings, which culminated in the suicide of the FPL leader Salvador Carpio. Given the FMLN's history of settling internal political conflicts through assassinations and shoot-outs, however, these recent events are really not surprising.

Nor is the recent decision on the part of Cuba and the Sandinistas to cut a deal at the expense of their comrades fighting in El Salvador extraordinary. After all, say the Sandinistas, they are merely practising "survival politics". Thus, the FMLN/FDR are being pressured to seek a political settlement with the Salvadoran government, even though the latter is absolutely incapable of defeating the guerillas militarily; hardly a good bargaining position for seizing state power and installing a classical Marxist-Leninist dictatorship over the population. The Sandinistas, on the other hand, are in a much stronger bargaining position. Not only are they clearly winning their war against U.S.-sponsored contras, it is inconceivable that the Somozistas could ever take power no matter how much money is poured into their forces, because they are widely recognized by the population as an enemy.

Solidarity Movement in the U.S.

Meanwhile, the Solidarity movement in the United States has never been so weak and passive. In most cities, solidarity and anti-intervention activities have reached an all-time low, as groups like the Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) increasingly focus their energies on Congressional lobbying and similar efforts. On July 19th, National CISPES sent a packet to its local chapters containing an update on its activities: a "people to people" fund-raising campaign, possible Fall tours, a campaign around the recent "certification" by President Reagan of progress in human rights areas by the Salvadoran government, and a planned November 12 rally in Washington. None of these activities are in any way aimed at shutting off the flow of

U.S. arms to Central America; instead, they seek to convince the government to call off its attacks against the peoples of Central America.

Perhaps the most indicative of this tack is CISPES's proposal to put an initiative on the California ballot, asking whether or not California voters support increased U.S. intervention in El Salvador. CISPES acknowledges that it will take tens of thousands of dollars merely to get this initiative on the ballot, and even much more to win. After the expenditure of time and money, little if anything will be accomplished by a victory, although an electoral defeat would represent a major setback to the organization.

Doomed to Failure

It seems clear that such activities, relying as they do on the government to cease its attacks, are doomed to failure. The effective take-over of organized opposition to U.S. policy in Central America by a handful of vanguard Marxist-Leninist parties on the one hand, and the Catholic Church on the other, has strengthened the reliance on letters to Congress, petitions, electoral initiatives, memorial masses, and insipid demonstrations where activists are bussed about the country to listen to a variety of M-Lers and liberals call for support for their particular brand of authoritarianism, whether in El Salvador, Nicaragua, or in North America. Such activities cannot stop the course of U.S. policy; instead an anti-intervention movement committed to stopping U.S. intervention through direct action must be built.

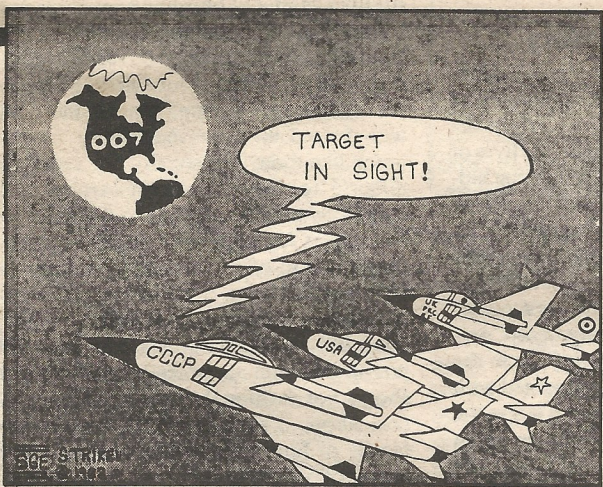
Direct action aimed at making it impossible for the government to carry out war-business as usual — through blockades of troop trains, hot cargoing military supplies, shutdowns of weapons facilities, and the like — represents our only realistic hope to stop this war. We cannot hope to change government policy, we can only prevent its implementation.

At the same time, we must make our opposition to authoritarian groupings such as the FMLN/FDR and the Sandinistas clear. These groupings have demonstrated their repressive nature plainly, shattering the illusions of those who once held that their victory would create the conditions under which the fight for freedom could continue beyond the overthrow of the rightist dictatorship. What is needed in Central America is the development of anti-authoritarian revolutionary movements and forces. In the absence of such forces, however, we have no alternative but to block, insofar as we can, the U.S. government's efforts to maintain the existing brutal regimes in Central America, or to install new ones even more repressive than those now in power.

man Oueddei seem to have lost their nerve when Mitterand's Maulers sent their Entendard fighters buzzing overhead. Well, if this one doesn't work out, he can always occupy Malta as a consolation.

Turkey was once known as the sick man of Europe. Following this analogy, Lebanon would be the hemophiliac of the Middle East. There seems to be no end to the destruction that can be wrought there, or at least to the willingness of the followers of either Gemayel or Jumlat to wreak it. The only benefit to the people of Beirut, as I understand, has been an increased facility of "window-shopping" provided that after the shells hit there is anything left to steal, or that you have a home to bring it to (I hear there are people with new furniture living in refugee tents in the middle of the city).

There's much more to be said about Lebanon, but I'll wait until next column to do it justice. Let's hope there's a Lebanon left to write about.



THE REAL ATROCITY -- IS WORLD WAR III

By Ivan Kalita

The downing of Korean Air Lines flight 007 by a Russian SU-15 fighter will go down in history as one of those brilliant and courageous military feats, like the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the Japanese Red Army's machine-gunning of Christian pilgrims in Lod Airport in Israel. Of course, the Russian high command did not need this act to prove its taste for gratuitous violence against civilians, as it has shown in Afghanistan and Eritrea. Of course, sooner or later the Russians will come up with a scapegoat, either the Air District Commander or the hapless pilot, both of whom undoubtedly believed in all honesty that they were defending the borders of the Socialist Fatherland from imperialist attack.

Still, the hypocrisy in this matter of the American high command and its faithful legions of petty politicians, bought "journalists" and crackerbarrel philosophers is not to be believed. Commander Ron may not have his own planes shooting enemy civilians out of the sky (though the downing of an Egyptian passenger plane by his Israeli sidekicks a couple of years ago went almost unreported), but instead he has them butchered on the ground in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The Russians will have to take out a lot of passenger planes to even up the score with the Salvadoran death squads or the Nicaraguan "freedom fighters" hiding behind the Honduran border.

The danger now lies for those of us here in

North America who are trying to stop the current world war before it becomes the Last World War. An incident like this only feeds the propaganda mills of the war-hawks and tin-horn patriots, and makes reasonable argument against war and militarism all the more difficult. Just to complicate matters is the idiotic response of the Stalinist "left", (like the Peoples Anti-War Mobilization in the U.S., a front for the pro-Soviet Workers World Party) which parrots the Soviet line and justifies the shooting down of the aircraft. Now I would be a fool or a liar to deny the constant espionage by air the Americans use against the Russians, and there's a few questions about this flight I'd like answered myself. None of this, however, justifies a "shoot first, ask questions later" policy, especially when the lives of over 200 people lie in the balance.

On the other side of the globe, those of you who until recently thought that Chad was only half of a sixties British singing duo, must have been surprised to find out it had become one of the many battlefields of the world war. The fact that you might not have heard much about it before doesn't mean it hasn't had its share of violence and bloodshed in the past — in fact civil war as been the state of affairs almost since the country was carved out of the old French colonial empire. Such has been the case throughout Africa since the fifties, and as long as the Russians and Americans continue mixing it up, there seems to be no sign of letting up.



BREAD & ROSES



With this article, we begin the first of a three-part series on the lives of working-class women under early capitalism. Each article will be published in every second issue of STRIKE! The whole purpose for this historical series is to understand how women lived in the past, the kind of problems they faced and why. Although much of this article deals with Victorian England, the miserable conditions of English working women strike a remarkable resemblance to those of other countries in the same epoch. All quotes used in this article are taken from the original 19th century sources.

By Stefie Bierman

Prior to the emergence and triumph of capitalism, women were important producers in the community, particularly in the food, drink and clothing industries. In fact, it was quite common for women to accomplish themselves at a trade or skill on an equal basis with men. During medieval times, an outstanding proportion of women, for example, were enrolled in various guilds as "full and equal" members. The prevailing sentiment towards women and work during the pre-industrial era was that she should be able to support herself as well as manage the tasks assigned to her as wife and mother.

The transition from the pre-industrial to the industrial age, however, gave rise to a new sentiment on women and work. Capitalism and industrialization was fast becoming a reality and it was only a matter of time before small industries would be swallowed by large enterprises. Many tradesmen felt the impact of this coming epoch. This induced them to introduce measures and regulations in order to survive a little longer. It was women who became the victims of these regulations. Female tradesmen began to be regarded as competitors who did not belong. As early as the 1630's, for instance, the printers began to protest against women in the trade, and by the mid-17th century, managed to exclude any women from entering into the trade. Women who refused to submit under these new regulations were punished by law. For example, in 1639, a female brewer by the name of Mary Arnold was imprisoned because she continued to pursue her trade.

By the turn of the 19th century, the sentiment held towards women and work had completely changed from the one held in pre-industrial times. Under the new reality, woman was to be the motivating, but invisible force behind the successful entrepreneur. The 19th century lady was there merely for the purpose of providing an attractive and harmonious inner world for the predator upon his return from the competitive and brutal outer world of profiteering and exploitation. This image of femininity, however, could only be enforced among the wealthier classes. Since the average working class male could not sustain a family with the wages he earned; women, out of sheer necessity, were forced to join the ranks of the wage labourer.

The systematic attempt to exclude women from making a living left them few alternatives. Casual temporary labour in agriculture, needlework and domestic service were already overcrowded. The introduction of steam power in

'the textile industries, however, created a massive array of sweat shops. Women were now employed in the textile mills, particularly in the cotton mills. Small local industries such as the machine lace trade, gloving, string trade, netting, ropes, straw plaiting, framework knitting, hat making and embroidery, scattered throughout the country, were the major centres in which women slaved (as they still do today).

Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't...

Life in the factory was cheap. Employers who could easily get replacements from the countryside often worked their employees until they collapsed from fatigue. In 1843, for example, one witness in an official enquiry was to have reported seeing several young women who had been compelled to work 16 hours a day with only 1½ hours for rest and meals; in other cases, the same person had seen women who were forced to work all night in small, stuffy, overheated rooms. Mrs. Tonna in her book *The Wrongs of Women* (1844), describes how the process of work in the lace industry carried on for 20 hours a day. The winding was done by young women. This particular task required great care "and from the continued fixing of the eyes on the metal to which it had to be adjusted, the sight became strained, weakened and permanently injured".

Children too, were not exempt from the brutal exploitation of those enterprising gentlemen of the age. The 2nd Report from the Children's Employment Commission of 1843 describes the life of a Mrs. Houghton and her family, a Nottingham lace worker whose life typifies the fate of many working families. Mrs. Houghton had 4 children. Harriet 8, Anne 6, Mary 4, and Eliza 2. In the summer, Mrs. Houghton began work at 6 in the morning, 7 a.m. in the winter. In the former, she worked until it was dark; in the latter, till 10 p.m. The two older children worked similar hours, Mary beginning at the same time in the morning but leaving about 8 p.m. It appears that 13 or 14 hours a day was the ordinary work of very young children. The report goes on to say that "many mothers have complained to me that their hearts ache to send their children to work at such an early age, but they are compelled to do it to get bread for their families".

Other occupations available for women were in husbandry (farm labour), domestic service and mining. Domestic service was considered to be the most acceptable occupation for women because it placed her in an environment which did not contradict her "nature". A servant was very much a domestic slave. Employ-

ers supervised over the actions, character, life style and dress of their servants. The servants were told if and when they could go out and with whom. The hours were unusually long, from about 6:30 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Hidden From History

Women's underground labour was forbidden in 1842. Prior to that, they had worked as hurriers and drawers in mine pits as early as the 12th century. Physically out of sight, the lives of women miners were a subterranean terror hidden blissfully and conveniently from history for more than five centuries. The respectable "gentlemen of civilized society" of the 1800's were suddenly horrified by these long established facts. A legislation in 1842 which grew out of the Report of Children's Employment Commission outlawed women from working in the pits. These gentlemen were not concerned with the actual plight of the working poor; it was the "unfeminine barbarity", the obvious deviation from women's "natural functions", and the "general odium it excites" that had so troubled the good conscience of the bourgeoisie. The report of an American gentleman on women working in the Lancashire pits was truly revealing:

"... weird swarthy creatures, figures of women, half clad in man's and half in woman's attire, plunging here and there, as if engaged in some bedlamish saturnalis. It is one of the most picturesque scenes of labour I ever beheld, and it has the element of wild and awful grandeur in it."

In the eyes of Patriarchy, human misery and deprivation can appear as spectacles of grandeur, terror as sights of festivity. (The word 'saturnalis' originates in Saturnalia, a yearly festival of the god Saturn held in ancient Rome in December. It was a time of rejoicing and merry-making.)

The work in the mines was terribly wretched, and whenever there were factories in the region, women preferred to work in the latter. Working in the wet pits devastated the health of most women. Some mines still used the girle and chain method. Women forced to use this method crawled along the floors harnessed to their tubs by a belt of leather or rope. The belt passed around the waist or shoulders and from it a chain passed between the legs and was hooked on to the tub which contained up to 200 lbs. of coal. This method, designed for beasts of burden, was the source of many internal injuries to women, especially for those who were pregnant.

Women's forced entry into the workplace, however, began to create a whole new set of

fears and problems for the ruling patriarchs. What was feared by "society" was the implication of women's independence and the breakdown of the family and "morality". In order to redeem patriarchal authority and dominance within the family unit, massive campaigns were organized to exclude women from working in the factories. The main rationale for the Victorian's attempt to remove married women from the factories was that an unemployed husband might remain "content in his idleness" if the wife was bringing home weekly wages, and that women would displace the authority of adult men. Lord Ashley, a self-proclaimed philanthropist dedicated to the "plight of the down-trodden", expressed his fears in these words: "Nor must we omit to press upon the attention of the public the gradual displacement of males by the substitution of female labour in a large proportion of the industrial occupation of the country... This evil... is spreading rapidly and extensively... desolating like a torrent, the peace, the economy and the virtue of the mighty masses of the manufacturing districts. Domestic life and domestic discipline must soon be at an end."

A British writer, T.J. Barnardo, wrote in 1889 that, "The east end of London is a hive of factory life and *factory* means that which is inimical to *home*... They (the factory women) are easily thrown upon the world to 'fight their own hand', there is bred in them a spirit of precocious independence, which weakens family ties and is highly unfavourable to the growth of domestic virtues".

The consequences resulting from the breakdown of the old order, i.e., strong family unit, morality and authority, was just part of the panic running rampant among the ruling patriarchs. Their insistence upon excluding women from wage-labour was particularly emphasized during depression times. High unemployment has always necessitated the existence of a scapegoat. Women's presence in the factories threatened the few remaining jobs available to men. And the fact that women were considered to be better slaves and more submissive than men, that they were categorized as supplemental labourers — therefore receiving less wages than their male counterparts — made them unwelcome, but popular employees.

For many women, however, work was simply a matter of bringing home bread. Those who managed to get work in the factories, especially the cotton mills, received comparatively higher wages. But in periods of economic depression and unemployment, most women were forced into seasonal labour, a situation much like today. Seasonal work usually lasted about 3 to 4 months; total earnings ranging from 4 pounds 10 shillings to 6 pounds, which had to last for a full year. An example of how far that kind of wage would get them can be seen by examining some of the prices of merchandise at that time. According to the price index of 1870, a loaf of bread cost 5 to 6 pence; a pound of sugar, 2 pence; 1 pair of women's shoes, not fashionable boots or dress shoes, cost about 6 shillings. This means that if a family of four were to buy *nothing else* but 2 loaves of bread per day for the whole year, they would need 18 pounds and 5 shillings to make it. How did the workers survive? Most of them didn't for long. The average life span of a poor male in 1870 was around 43, and much less for a poor female.

There were also many other dangers involved in this kind of work, as one of the women miners described: "It is very severe work, especially when we have to stay before the tubs, on the brace, to prevent them coming down too fast; they frequently run too quick and knock us down when they run over-fast we fly off the roads and let them go, or we should be crushed. Mary Peacock was severely crushed a fortnight since".

It was not only the working poor who were subjected to great distress in a society that attempted to exclude women from jobs. Many women from the middle classes, whose families either lost their entire incomes or who experienced financial difficulties, had to look for employment. These women were neither prepared for hardships, nor were they educated or learned in any skill that might make their task any easier. Governessing was the only 'respectable' job available for such a woman who still wanted to maintain some air of respectability. It was believed that by caring for and educating young children, the governess could still fulfill her role as homemaker. However, their task was a difficult one, for they were not equipped to teach. Often too, they were expected to act as servants and nursemaids as well as teachers. The seclusion and loneliness of a governess made her job and her life as desolate as, perhaps, a factory worker's or domestic servant's.

Anarchist Viewpoint



The following is a communiqué to the libertarian movement from the Emmanuel Goldstein Group. It was smuggled out of Poland early this summer.

The Emmanuel Goldstein Group consists of members of the same grouping which issued 'A Proclamation to the Libertarian Movement in the West' last December in the name of the Sigma Group. (See 'Poland: Return of the Anarchists', STRIKE! Vol. 3 No. 1, P. 5). As the new communiqué indicates, the Sigma name was a source of confusion to many in the West. It is now known that it was used at the time for security reasons.

The new name is adopted from a character in George Orwell's 1984 which is a very popular novel among young Poles. The group itself is small and now faces the problem of being completely cut off from other libertarian militants active in Poland. Thanks to political manoeuvring within the Solidarnosc underground, it also lacks the ability it once had to communicate libertarian ideas through the underground press.

Last month, a member of the STRIKE! Collective met with a member of the Emmanuel Goldstein Group in Warsaw. On that occasion the comrade stressed to us that the group was still experiencing great difficulty in acquiring printing equipment essential to gaining self-reliance in their publishing efforts. He expressed the hope that libertarians in the West could be of direct assistance in this regard. Such equipment as well as English language translations of libertarian literature, were mentioned as the two things most desired by the group for its work. Money is also needed.

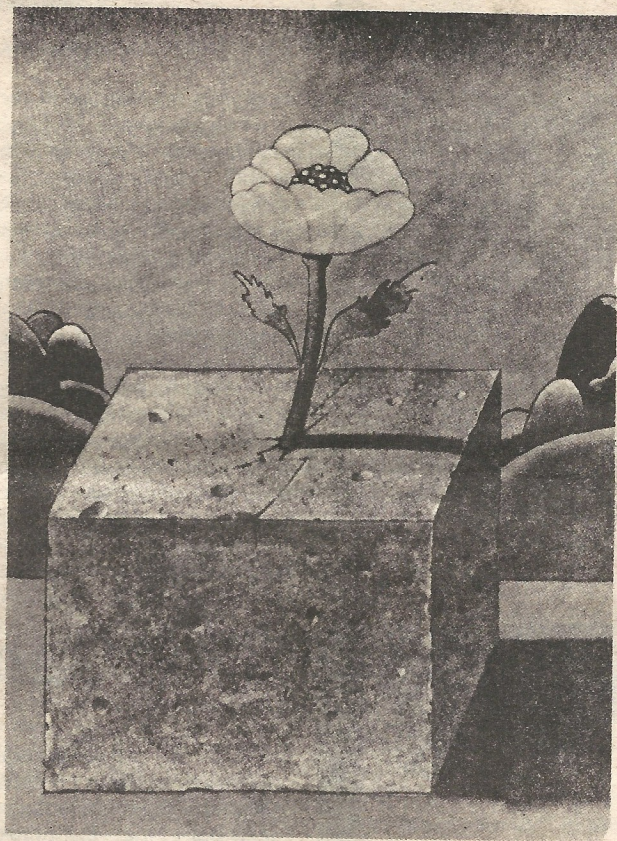
Given these requests STRIKE! wishes to appeal again to its readers to show their solidarity with these Polish anarchists. The small amount of money raised last time contributed to an international total of about \$1370 U.S. which was delivered to members of the Emmanuel Goldstein Group by West German comrades last June. There is no reason why more is not possible this time. We would also like to encourage any person(s) in North America wishing to assist in conducting a public campaign to contact us at STRIKE!, P.O. Box 284, Main Station, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 6T7, Canada. Please make cheques or money orders payable to 'The Emmanuel Goldstein Fund'.

This is the first communiqué of Emanuel Goldstein Group.

Listen dear comrades from the west!

On June the 16th we have founded the Emmanuel Goldstein Group. We are Polish libertarians and here is some information for our western friends.

First some words about all that SIGMA-confusion. SIGMA is still a group of leftists but they are active only in a legal framework allowed by the Communist Party. We don't want to have contacts with those people (any more). Before December the 13th the situation was different. Some possibilities of expressing libertarian ideas in print existed (in the magazine Nowa Gazeta Mazowiecka and in the pamphlet series Archiwum Lewicy. Now SIGMA is a kind of a security ventile (valve, vent). It can be a great help for the secret police to have left-wing people gathered in one place; it is easier to control them. By the way, now the



Voices from Underground Poland

Anarchist Viewpoint is a regular feature of STRIKE! which seeks to present material from the international Anarchist and Libertarian Communist movement. Such material may be of a topical or theoretical nature. Our aim is to expose our readers to the debates and controversies shaping modern Anarchism.

total number of SIGMA-members is only seven. Before marshal law it had a membership of 50.

We don't understand all that noise and confusion about SIGMA in the western libertarian press. We even laughed a little bit about it. Nechaev is still alive, isn't he? (If I understood them right, they meant by this that some comrades in the west have a very wild conspirative fantasy.)

And now something about the situation of Polish left-radical opposition. Within last months the situation here has become worse. The contacts (to other groups) have been broken, especially with well equipped underground publishing houses and printing shops. They have wanted to get twice as much money for printing leftist underground literature. SOLIDARNOSC's leaders have ordered not to distribute publications of that kind.

To give an example: the leaders of SOLIDARNOSC several times stopped the distribution of a leftist journal called Mis (Teddy Bear) because of it's revolutionary and anti-clerical position. So you can publish something and not know if you have a chance to distribute it by the network of SOLIDARNOSC distributors. Another example has been Rownose (Equality). The underground printers took money from Rownose and promised to produce 2000 copies and actually they only produced 500 (for the same price).

Right wing elements of SOLIDARNOSC — we even can say it about all it's top leadership — started a campaign against these publications accusing them of national betrayal and political provocation. In this campaign those most active have been men connected with an underground Catholic paper called Victoria which has the holy mother in it's title head. In another paper called Niepodleglosc (Independence) — in its 8th issue 1982 — they published an article in which they accused Rownose of being a paper of the security police. Besides, libertarian publications have been very popular among Polish workers even if they are Roman Catholics. They are really interested in anarchist ideas, especially because official propaganda

uses the word *anarchy* in a negative context as something anti-communist.

And now some words about the underground SOLIDARNOSC movement. SOLIDARNOSC is not a homogeneous organization. Only a part of its (former) membership — about 100,000 — is still active; for instance in the field of distribution of underground literature, especially journals. We can probably say that their total monthly number of copies is from about 3 to 8 million. The dissident Center of Social Research of the Masurian region (a SOLIDARNOSC organization) has knowledge of more than 1200 different underground journals published all over the country, even in villages.

The most active members of underground SOLIDARNOSC are workers, first of all workers from big factories in main industrial centers, college students and intellectuals. In general, the workers are not now interested in short small strikes. Of course some strikes happen from time to time, but they are, first of all, of an economic character. The trend is to be prepared for the general strike in the future when circumstances are better.

There are two views of the general strike among top leaders of underground SOLIDARNOSC: First there is the tendency to come

to a national agreement (with the military junta under Jaruzelski) which would include the restoration of SOLIDARNOSC as a legal trade union without any important changes in the political system in Poland. This tendency does not have the greatest support of the people, but some leaders — for instance W. Hardek* from Krakow — support it. It is a kind of reformist (strategy), very doubtful in its results. The second trend — the stronger one — also in the leadership of SOLIDARNOSC, for instance in Wroclaw, the Masurian region and also in Nowa Huta, is to overthrow the political system using revolutionary methods. But on the other side, this tendency has not found an expression of their political means (and perspectives). Now the greatest chances are for men standing for a social revolutionary party in the (Russian) social democratic tradition using revolutionary methods to reach political power in future. Nationalistic-clerical forces may also have a great influence in future.

And now listen to our views about the situation. First of all we need to say that the whole leftist and libertarian tradition has been destroyed by the communists. So we are to support those libertarian tendencies existing inside SOLIDARNOSC; today the social revolutionary trend and tomorrow, after it's (SOLIDARNOSC) possible, split the trends close to anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism. These have positions which aim for workers autonomy, workers control and very popular ideas of a self-governed society. Reactionaries want to get total control over these tendencies and, consequently, our aim is to support libertarian elements and to attack the clerical nationalists. In the case of a general conflict, for instance a general strike, our place will of course be within SOLIDARNOSC.

We shall spread libertarian ideas by publications and (we will try) to win more followers of anarchism among students, workers and intellectuals. This year we shall try to solve our technical and distribution problems in publishing. First of all, we are going to buy a printing machine which makes us independent of SOLIDARNOSC — and private printers. Contacts with such people (mainly with private printers) are always a source of great danger. Of course we have some problems with paper, printing ink and other printing equipment. We hope we shall solve all these problems. The other main problem is distribution. We try to gain different networks. First the SOLIDARNOSC-network; in a longer perspective we want to build (up) our own.

Our plans include a series of pamphlets. In the first period, translations of basic western and Russian anarchist texts and also our own interpretations. For instance, these are translations of Nicolas Walter's "About Anarchism", Murray Bookchin's "Listen Marxist", some short texts by Piotr Kropotkin, an anthology of Polish anarchist poems, some old Polish libertarian texts by (Edward) Abramowski and (Josef) Zielinski and of course some satirical pieces dealing with today's situation. We shall also produce leaflets on different occasions, for instance on May 1. In the longer perspective we will try to issue a journal; maybe a monthly or quarterly to be used as a platform for libertarian ideas.

And last, but not least, we would like to express our great, great gratitude to all the comrades from the libertarian movement in the west — especially from Italy, Netherlands, United States and other countries — (Polish words:) thank you very much! Your help and practical solidarity is very important to us. We shall never forget it.

To pursue our libertarian ends we have to come together to understand each other, to exchange information about the situation on both sides. Your help is one of the first blows against the wall of statism (the state-system) dividing us. Together we shall smash it!

Warszawa, June the 16th, 1983.



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Soviets Lock Out Workers

By Mike Harris

Back in June of this year, the new management of Four Continent Books in New York, the sole distributors of Soviet crafts and reading materials in the U.S., decided to lock out its workers — members of District 65, UAW.

Not willing to recognize the seniority rights of many workers (some of whom have worked close to 25 years) and their economic demands, the management felt that it could get along by turning a deaf ear to the workers. Not quite, since then the bookstore was effectively closed by the workers.

In an attempt to reach an agreement with the new management, rank-and-filers and District 65 leadership contacted the Soviet consulate in New York, but to no avail. The consulate notified the union that Four Continent Books is a private company, and will not get involved in the dispute. This tactic is similar to what had happened six or seven years ago, when the bookstore workers went on strike and the Soviet consulate assigned people to scab on the strikers. Only this time the Consulate did not send in scabs.

At a July union rally in front of the consulate, members of the

Libertarian Workers Group issued a statement that gets to the heart of the problem:

"While we gather here today to express our outrage at the lockout of our brothers and sisters ... we should keep in mind that what is happening here is part of something much larger as well. By refusing to stop doing business with Four Continents, the Soviet government has shown an indifference to the fate of the strikers that is only a small taste of the brutality with which it treats its own workers. We see, then, there is little difference between Russian bosses and American bosses, especially when workers begin to demand what is rightfully theirs.

"So it only makes sense that working people in the East and the West have interests in common and should act in solidarity with each other's struggles. To make this effective we need organizations and movements that give us a chance to air our feelings and opinions on our common problems. Such organizations should embody the truest spirit of rank-and-file democracy, from the shop-floor to the international level. They should be responsible to their own members only, and not to the bosses or politicians of any stripe.

"The problem often comes up, however, that those who claim

to be acting in our own interests get in the way or betray us. In our own union, District 65, the leadership talks a lot about rank-and-file control of the day-to-day union affairs but keeps the real decision making to itself, often behind closed doors. When brothers and sisters in the shops have tried to wage a militant struggle against runaway shops, layoffs, etc., only too often the leaders have told them to be 'moderate' and not 'to risk our jobs', as if they weren't at risk already. Those who challenge this state of affairs at union meetings are simply labeled 'disrupters' and 'slanderers' without the questions they raise ever being answered.

"It should be clear by now that here, as everywhere else, workers need new organizations to push their cause forward. We should begin by talking in our shops, discussing the problems we face and the possible solutions at hand. It is a long road ahead to win what we really want, but if we are to go anywhere, we must begin now. At the end of this road, however, lies a better life for us and our brothers and sisters around the world, whether in the U.S., El Salvador, South Africa, Poland, or Russia.

LWG members in District 65"

Shop Talk

by Mike Harris

For many garment and knitwear shops, the busy season has either begun, or is about to begin. In the shop where I work, our busy season is right around the corner. This means super-overtime and a greater drive for production.

Since the busy season usually lasts for only about three months, one can imagine how hectic the shop gets and how uptight the boss is to get his goods out. Unlike the past two seasons, our boss hasn't called a shop meeting to tell us how bad the season is going to be and how we need to push out twice as many goods as the season before. Not that we ever heeded his words anyway, but even if he did the trick again, it would do little good, since we have seen the orders piling up since late June.

As in the past, the company hires temporary workers for the season. All of these three-months temps belong to the union, and are dispatched through the hiring hall. Being the inquiring soul that I am, I'm always curious to find out where these temps worked before and what struggles they may have been involved in, or if they've encountered similar problems with the union as we have (I belong to District 65, UAW textile).

It seems like year after year, and from worker after worker I hear the same problems and the same sort of cynicism on the part of these folks: poor contracts, unresponsive union bureaucrats,

and many stewards who would rather look the other way than do his/her job. In some cases stewards don't even exist, and in other cases, the steward is the same as low level management, or "working supervisors" as the union calls them. It's such cynicism which saps the militant spirit of many workers. These people feel that no matter what they do to better their situation, they are blocked by the union and the boss. Rather than attempting to change the situations collectively and independently (of hierarchy), these folks just shrug and say "There's nothing you can do."

But is there? I think the answer is yes, and the history of many struggles where people take *direct control* of their situations has born this out. Even under the tyranny of dictatorships, workers have been able to regain some sense of their class power. Even when the class struggle is temporarily submerged below the surface, workers have been able to get a sense of what they can do independently of political hacks and union bureaucrats.

Our present situation is no different. Once these workers, and for that matter all workers, begin to collectively work and struggle together they will begin to see what they can achieve for themselves and, generally speaking, on their own terms. But until that time, workers will continue to remain cynical, and things will remain the same as before.

direct resistance.

The Five are now facing their first trial in a small court room in New Westminster. This trial deals with the "criminal charges". These are: conspiracy to rob a Brinks armoured truck, possession of restricted weapons, 3 counts of vehicle theft, 4 counts of possession of stolen property, (communication equipment, vehicles and guns), possession of explosives, and breaking and entering. If the state gains convictions on these charges, then it will have gone a long way towards criminalizing a segment of the resistance-protest movement. Such convictions will then be used as a bid for character assassination in the subsequent trials. Thanks to the psychology of hysteria and siege created by the media and police, more than half of 488 potential jurors questioned in a public opinion poll had shown to have derogatory opinions against the Five. As one libertarian publication in Canada warns: "if the authorities are successful in railroading the Five, then police, judicial officials, and the news media will consider it open season to employ their tactics on a larger and more intrusive scale". (*Open Road Extra*, 1983

The Same Old Game

By Neil Farber

A dispute within the leadership of District 65, arising from the conduct of the Four Continents Book strike (mentioned in this issue), has reopened the debate on union democracy and illustrated some divisions within the membership. Interestingly enough, this split was not apparent at the last meeting of the union's General Council (the chief decision-making body of the union, comprised by all the shop stewards, unpaid local officers and staff and paid officers). At that meeting, the theme was unity with a capital 'U' and the delegates were treated to a series of upbeat reports on union activities. The special treat for the evening was the appearance of a number of United Auto Workers (the "parent" international union) officials, including none other than newly-elected UAW President Owen "Leave it To" Bieber himself. Bieber, supposedly present to swear in elected officers of 65 for another 3 year term (they had almost all run without opposition), made his visit a stomping ground for the UAW's protectionist program, this program is supposed to save American jobs by greasing the wheels for American capitalists, who are being outdone by greedy Japanese capitalists. (American bosses, of course, are far more progressive and democratic).

The controversy in the union revolved around the editor and assistant editor of the union newspaper. They had opposed the leadership's decision to call a demonstration at the Soviet mission (see the L.W.G.'s leaflet in this issue), claiming that the Soviets weren't the key, and that the real place to go was the owner's operations in Baltimore and on the West Coast. (It may be noted without engaging in red-baiting that these two had been known as having political sympathies with the Soviet Union). They refused to cooperate in planning the demonstration and were summarily fired by the leadership.

In response, they and a group of supporters issued some leaflets, and came to the August General Council meeting to attempt to have the firings reconsidered. While they made a number of valid points about the erosion of democracy in the union, it was noted by a number of us who had previously raised these issues at meetings that these two had been conspicuously silent (such are the rewards for playing the game). Also, they failed to address the

fact that the strikers themselves had asked for the rally at the Soviet Mission.

The response from the leadership was, needless to say, reprehensible. Insults, red-baiting, and subtle lies poured forth as union officials and "loyal" members came forward one by one, "spontaneously", of course. This kind of "spontaneity" is merely a testimony to the kind of slavishness the union leadership commands among its faithful followers. The final vote was, also needless to say, lopsided in favor of the firings.

During the course of the debate, a number of divisions among those present came out. Support for the two fired came largely from the white-collar locals (legal services, publishing, office, education) who themselves are mostly newer members of the union (5 years or less). They were assailed by mostly older members of blue-collar locals (dry goods, wholesale, garment and textile) who were egged on by the officials and loyalists using the rhetoric of devotion to the union, of selflessness and sacrifice (the parallel to totalitarian rhetoric is striking).

While there was some merit in the charges of elitism being leveled at the white-collar locals, it should be remembered that in months past, the leadership had actively promoted that sense of elitism by praising these locals to the sky and showing them what appeared to be preferential treatment. Meanwhile, blue-collar membership continued to erode, grievances went unanswered, and blue-collar militants who raised these issues were attached or bullied by the leadership. Thus, it is not surprising that the slogans of rank-and-file democracy put forward by the new oppositionists were met with skepticism by those who had fought in the past.

There are a number of lessons to be learned from this incident. First of all, we see that union leaders can use the tactics of divide and rule as well as the other bosses. Secondly, that playing along with those in power, whether on the shop floor or in the union hall, only insures your own defeat in the long run. Thirdly, that despite the short-term gains that might be made, it is as impossible that the existing unions can be transformed by changing leaders that the workplaces could become "socialist" by changing bosses. The whole set-up must be swept aside so that new organizations of workers can get rid of the bosses and establish a truly socialized and self-managed economy.

Unclassifieds

Due to the lack of space in this issue, Unclassifieds is cancelled and will reappear as usual in the next issue.



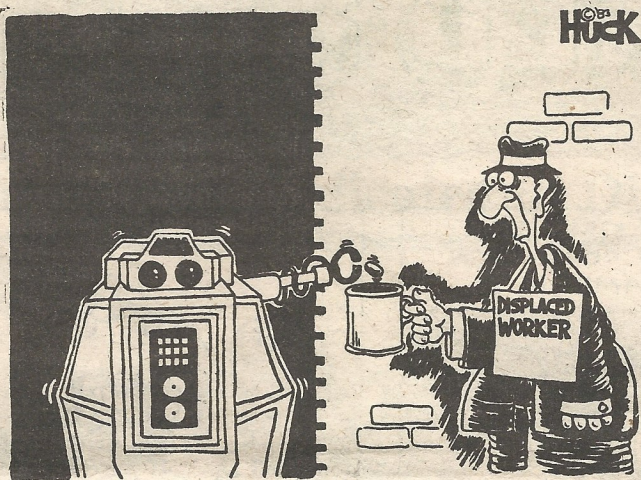
STRIKE! Note: Having situated the case of the Five within the Canadian political landscape, the next issue of **STRIKE!** will present a step-by-step analysis of the actual trial itself. This includes the different legal manoeuvres by the crown, the nature of the charges and evidence, and finally, the extent of support and resistance.

Trial: continued from pg 1

a black suit. At this point, Deyarmond "was physically picked up and had his shirt and jacket pushed up over his head". On the way to the security office in the hotel, he was being assaulted and threatened. Deyarmond was charged with three counts of assault on police, threatened assault against internationally protected person and one count of possession of marijuana (which had been planted on him during the incident). Incidentally, Deyarmond is an active member of the Toronto-based Support the Five Group and has officially been under surveillance for some time.

The vital question, therefore, becomes: In spite of their diverse and, at times, conflicting political orientations, what is the lowest common denominator among these groups and individuals? Answer: they have been the most vocal and militant elements within the protest-resistance movements. So far, the terrain as well as the duration of police activities clearly point to something beyond the normal process of "criminal investigations". The state will stop at nothing to discredit and destroy any form of

Labour Pains



Call in the National Guard!

On July 1, 2,400 Arizona copper workers employed at four Dodge Phelps Corporation complexes struck for a three year contract in the face of company demands for an end to cost of living allowance payments, reduced fringe benefits and lower wages for new hires. By the end of the month the strike turned into a violent confrontation, escalating further as the corporation began hiring new employees to replace strikers. In response, the strikers at one Dodge Phelps operation in Ajo, Arizona staged demonstrations and mass pickets at which they could be seen with baseball bats and chains. The Ajo example was picked up upon 300 miles away at the strikebound Morenci operations as a 1000-strong mass picket was organized on August 10. This succeeded in shutting the place down.

In order to prevent the closure of operations from continuing, the state intervened on August 20 to reopen the site. Production resumed in the presence of 500 cops and 325 National Guardsmen. Composing part of this show of armed force were police sharpshooters stationed on nearby hilltops and National Guard helicopters flying overhead. Significantly, the state-enforced victory for Dodge Phelps is not without precedent. When miners employed by Dodge Phelps at Morenci struck for higher pay during World War 1, the National Guard was also called in. This example of history repeating itself is a blunt illustration of how, in some ways, little has changed since then.

Problems? Let's have P.R.

About a year ago, the leadership of the amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union decided to launch a rather slick internal union P.R. campaign.

Due to the continuing economic depression, the massive lay-offs in the clothing and textile industries, and the sporadic outbursts of anger by rank-and-file, the union leadership decided to cool down the membership by making ship and mill tours. These tours are intended to show the members that the

"international leaders" are "concerned" with their problems. These tours are also meant to pin-point the weak links in the bureaucratic net and to tow dissidents into line. The outcome? The tours cost the memberships more than \$60,000 a year, and criticisms of the bureaucracy continue unabated.

Who Profits?

Before the Allied Corporation took over Bendix, a "golden parachute" was arranged for the departing Bendix chairman, including \$4.1 million severance and a couple of million more in stock. Meanwhile, a fifth of the company's employees were notified they'd probably be dropped from the rolls — no parachutes for them!

Chrysler Rip-Off to Continue

Q. When does a struggle for wage parity never lead to wage parity?

A. When you're a Chrysler worker.

Typically claiming victory, the leaders of the United Auto-workers (UAW) have gained membership approval on both sides

of the border for a new 26-month contract with the Chrysler Corporation. The contract is projected to raise wages by \$2.42 an hour. This achievement supposedly marks the approaching end of cut rate wage costs for the company relative to the other two of the Big Three automakers. But the fact of the matter is that autoworkers at both GM and Ford will continue to be paid higher wages even if they make only modest contract gains next year. Consequently, and despite record company profits, the super rip-off of the concessions-plagued Chrysler workers will extend into at least a fifth year.

Given this, it defies the imagination to think this UAW contract is a victory of any kind. No claim to victory will be justifiable until every giveaway made to Chrysler by the UAW has been fully recovered and topped off by substantial new gains.

GDR: continued from pg 1

all women between the ages of 18 and 50 in the event of war.

Their campaign began last October when 150 women signed an open letter to Erich Honecker, who heads the Socialist Unity Party. (See *East German Women Against Conscription*, STRIKE!, Vol. 3 No. 4, p. 6.) The number of signatories quickly grew to over 300, as an informal network of women opposed to conscription developed. In effect, this was a protest by emancipated women, living in an ostensibly socialist society, against a militaristic law of a regime ruled predominantly by men. The state's immediate response was to have some of the signatories arrested, and some of the others were verbally threatened by security police.

Repression

Repression has been characteristic of the Honecker regime's response to anti-militarist protests. Unofficial placards and wreaths used by activists at official peace events have evoked physical attacks by both uniformed and plain-clothes police. In a centralized society overwhelmed by state police, even the most seemingly harmless expression of free initiative can result in a severe response. A silent peace observance outside a church on Christmas eve last year by young pacifists in Jena was a case in point. Hundreds of security police were mobilized to block access to the site and to intimidate potential participants.

Jena has been a stronghold of peace activism. This at least partly accounts for why some of the city's most prominent opponents of militarism have been jailed on charges such as 'hooliganism'. In general, however, the most common reason why anti-militarists end up in prison is their individual refusal of compulsory military service. Hundreds have met this fate. Most recently, the state has increased its attack on the peace movement by forcing peace activists to emigrate to the West.

Despite repression of all forms, the movement carries on. Over 3000 pacifist youth and others marked this year's Dresden commemoration in a church, separate from a larger official ceremony. Just this month, a small protest was also held in Berlin at the U.S. and Soviet consulates. Several participants were arrested.

Clearly, this is a movement which will not let up even in the face of considerable intimidation. It is also a youthful movement motivated largely by Christian pacifist sentiment. As a result, there is a close relationship between the peace movement and the two main churches in the GDR. They are the Protestant Evangelical Church and the Catholic Church.

Both churches have been inconsistent in their support of the movement. The churches' hierarchies tend to be much less supportive than some of the local parishes where peace activism is often centred. Given its friendly orientation to the regime, the Evangelical Church, particularly its leadership, has maintained a distance from the movement and often played a mediating role. The smaller Catholic Church, on the other hand, has been more principled in adopting an anti-nuclear weapons stance. It has also been more consistent in supporting a central demand of the peace movement which calls for the option of "social peace work" as an alternative to conscripted military service.

Tactically, the major advantage gained from this connection is that the churches' property offers a relatively safe haven for voicing anti-militarism. But in the long run, the churches' influence will be more of an obstruction. In one respect, it will mitigate against peace activists evolving a more radical social critique from their opposition to militarism, and reinforces one which is moralistic.

It is true, however, that morality does provide the movement with a source of inner strength, precisely because it stands in contrast to the total immorality of the militaristic East German state. The peace activists are acutely conscious of this. One of the women who

opposed the conscription law illustrated this with respect to those who signed the open letter to Honecker: "We no longer believe that the cause for peace is advanced by yet more people joining the army when yet more weapons are being built without any open discussion about the alternative ways of safeguarding peace."

Liberalism

Liberalism is quite evident in the views of the peace activists as well, yet, this is not entirely bad, given the context of a social order enforced by police methods. Liberalism in Soviet-East Europe necessarily facilitates demands for the respect of basic civil liberties, which are systematically denied. During those brief periods or instances where the exercise of such rights has occurred, the effect has been very de-stabilizing which, in one way or another, has inadvertently set in motion a process of social change which fundamentally endangered the entire apparatus of repression. When this occurred, a military response by the bureaucratic ruling class becomes necessary, seeking to re-enforce 'normalization'. This, in turn, reveals how militarism is inherent in the social system, because it is essential to its preservation.

Still another problem affecting the movement is its failure to consider the implications of the Polish events. Such a failure reveals how the focus of attention has been limited almost exclusively on militarism alone. Yet what has happened in Poland weighs heavily upon the movement. For example, the successful imposition of martial law was a massive setback for the defence of democratic rights in Eastern Europe; the ability to exercise those same rights is an essential prerequisite for any possibility that autonomous peace movements can flourish there. Yet, East German peace activists have been silent regarding the repression in Poland.

A related and no less important matter is the failure to appreciate the potential social power of the East German working class. Given what

took place in the GDR in June 1953 and the revolt which gave birth to Solidarnosc in neighbouring Poland, this constitutes a glaring blind spot, reflective of the movement's liberalism. This omission indicates that these peace activists do not appreciate how much social weight their demands would carry if they were embraced by the East German proletariat. The history of Soviet-East European worker-revolts provides abundant proof of this.

In Solidarity

The movement against militarism in the GDR, as well as its counterparts elsewhere in the Soviet military block, presents anti-militarists in the West with the necessity of responding to it. That response must be one of vigorous and sustained defence activity, and at the same time, a continued resistance to Western militarism. Most immediately, this response can be realized through public actions in solidarity with these movements or campaigns, specifically organized on behalf of those directly victimized by repression.

It is equally critical to achieve the most pressing goal of the Western peace movement — to halt the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe. Although the prevention of their deployment will hardly end the arms race, it can temporarily obstruct it. Such a minor victory would directly benefit anti-militarist movements in countries like Germany by heightening the existing anti-war sentiment.

Taking all factors into consideration, the combined effect of such a course of events would render state repression of this new movement more difficult. The credibility and appeal of anti-militarist activities in the West would expand as a result. The consequent rise of anti-militarism in both military blocks also encourages the growth of a global social revolutionary movement, capable of attacking militarism at its roots and successfully confronting the one institution which, above all others, is its embodiment: the state.

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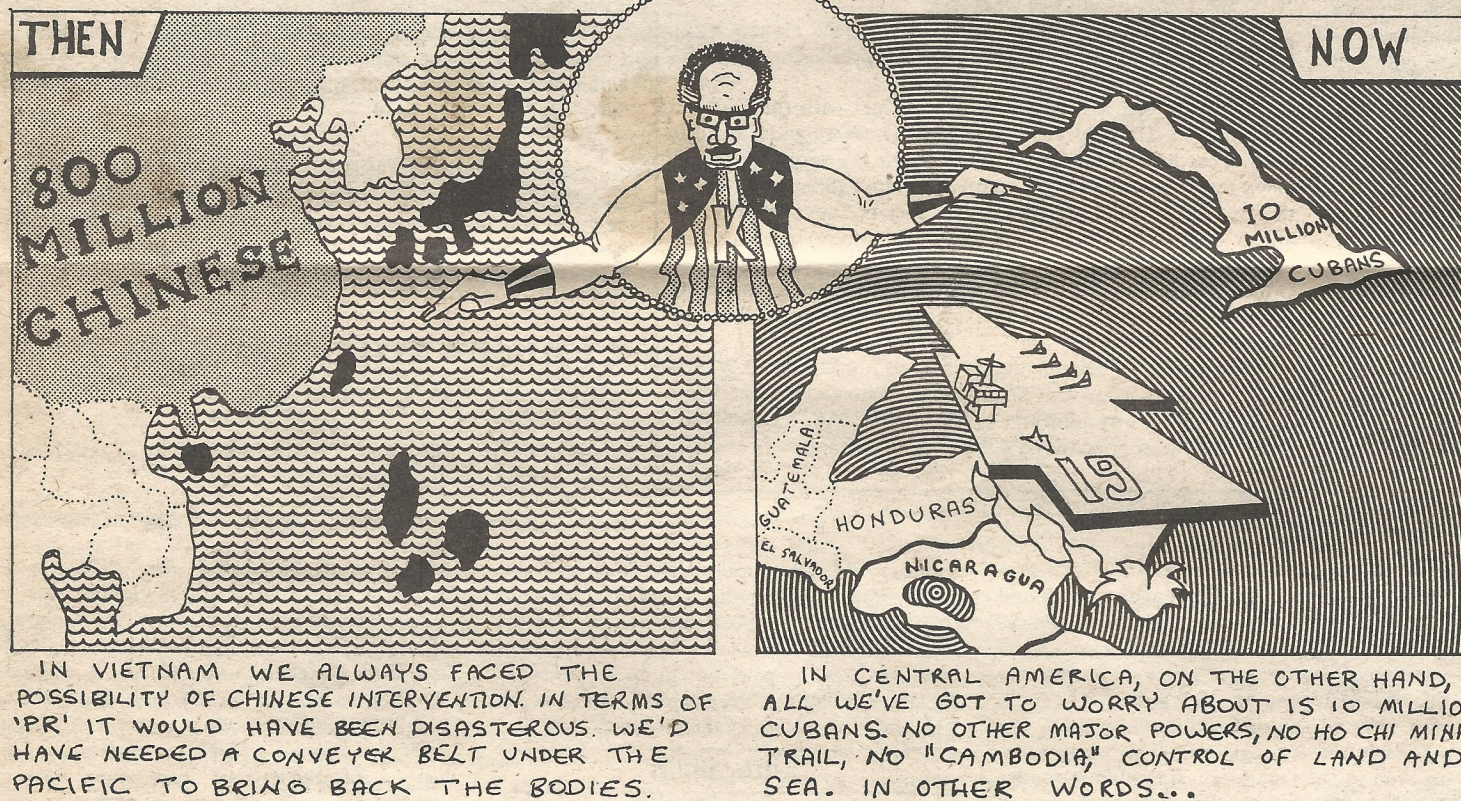
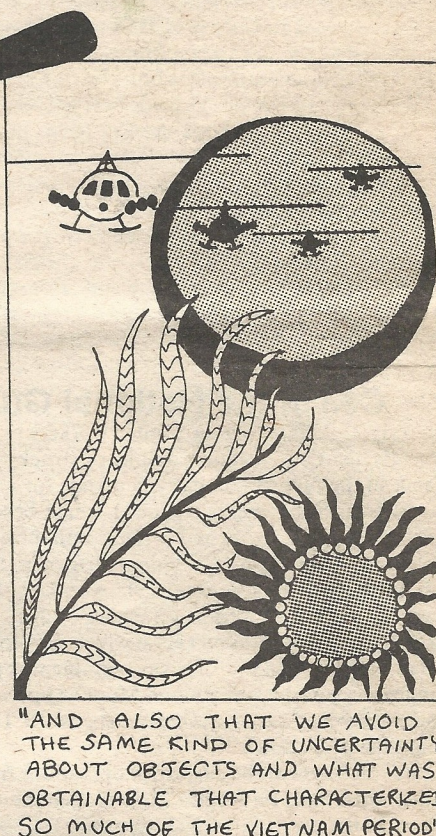
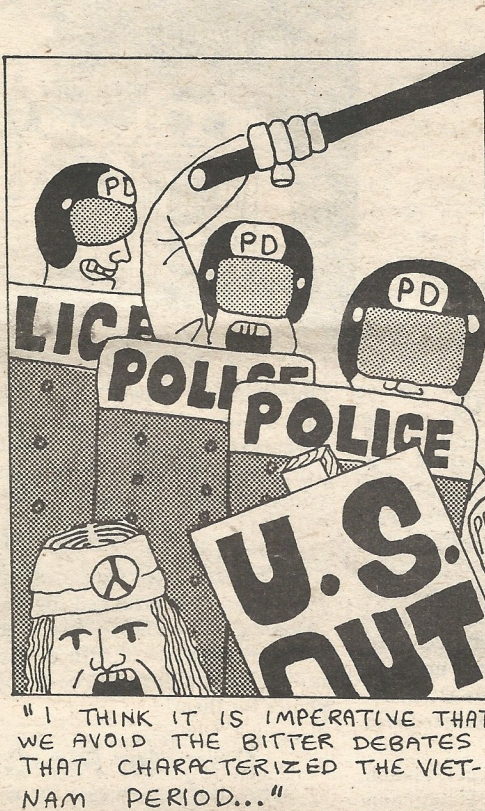
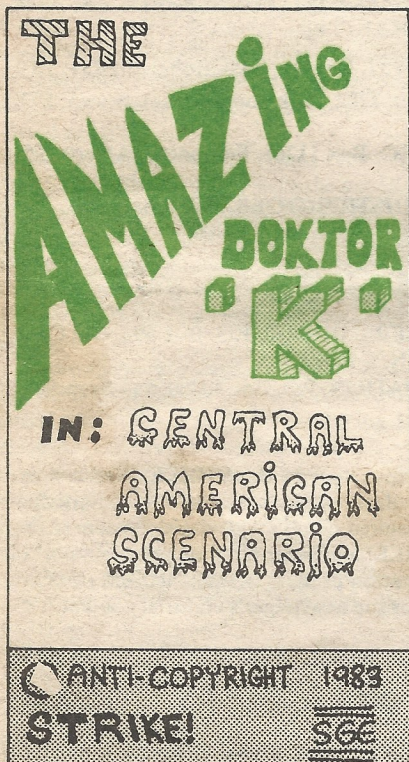
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MIXED MEDIA



A Fine Legacy in The Anarchist Tradition

Alexander Berkman was born in 1870 at Wilno which had been the capital of the Duchy of Lithuania in the Imperial Russian Empire. By the time he arrived in America in 1888, he was already a confirmed activist and soon under the influence of Johann Most he became an anarchist. He was a lifelong friend and comrade of Emma Goldman.

If Berkman had done nothing more in his life than write the *ABC of Anarchism* we should be for all time indebted to him. As the title implies, this is the primer that every fledgling libertarian needs to set them on the road to political action. At a time when most anarchists (indeed all political commentators) were writing in flowery prose Berkman had the sense to put it all down clearly and concisely. Observe

his crisp introduction. "I want to tell you about anarchism. I want to tell you what anarchism is, because I think it is well you should know it. Also because so little is known about it, and what is known is generally hearsay and mostly false. I want to tell you about it in such plain and simple language that there will be no misunderstanding it. But words and high sounding phrases serve only to confuse. Straight thinking means plain speaking."

Under such headings as 'Is Anarchism Violence?', 'Why Revolution?' and 'Principles and Practice' he lays out the anarchist programme in a beautifully logical step by step progression, which even a poor reader can follow. Where inevitably such terms as socialization, equity, and collectivization occur he explains simply just

what these terms mean so that the reader is not left to wallow in the slough of cant and rhetoric. How unlike so many writers who I suspect use such words not so much to explain themselves, as to impress the reader.

While he was himself a communist anarchist and this is the thrust of the book, its typical of Berkman that he includes a short chapter of non-communist anarchists. He writes "Before we proceed let me make a short explanation. I OWE IT TO THOSE ANARCHISTS WHO ARE NOT COMMUNISTS... being a communist anarchist I am interested in submitting to the reader the views that I consider best and soundest. I thought it fair, however, not to leave you in ignorance about the existence of other, non-communist theories." If all anarchist writers were as considerate and reasonable I can't help feeling there would be a lot less

bickering and wasted opportunities.

On June 28, 1936 just three weeks before the outbreak of the Spanish revolution, suffering with advanced cancer of the prostate, Alexander Berkman ended his struggle by ending his life. He left us a fine legacy in the story of his life and in this little book.

My copy of *ABC of Anarchism* is from Freedom Press 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E.1. It is 106 pages and cost two dollars U.S. It is printed with good ink on fine paper. The soft cover binding is excellent. I highly recommend it.

by Kenneth C. Hone